

IEC Toolbox Talk: Hazard Recognition & Focus Four Hazards

Theme: See It. Control It. Prevent It.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Most electrical jobsite incidents happen because hazards aren't recognized in time, not because crews don't know the rules.

Electrical work brings unique risks:

- Energized systems
- Arc flash exposure
- Working at height
- Tight, changing jobsite conditions

If you don't recognize the hazard, you can't control it.

WHAT IS HAZARD RECOGNITION?

Hazard recognition means identifying and controlling risks:

- **Before work begins**
- **When conditions change**
- **When new trades or crews are introduced**

Make it part of every task—not a one-time step.

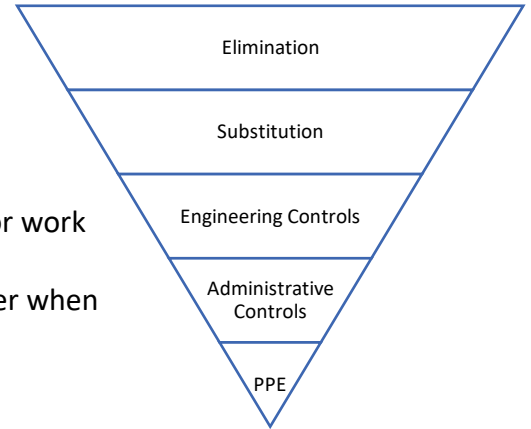
USE THE HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

Once a hazard is identified, use the Hierarchy of Controls to reduce risk using the most effective methods possible.

The Hierarchy of Controls is a method for reducing workplace hazards by prioritizing the most effective protections first: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, and PPE. Often, multiple controls are used together to best protect workers.

Most Effective → Least Effective

1. Elimination – Remove the hazard completely
2. Substitution – Replace the hazard with a safer option
3. Engineering Controls – Isolate people from the hazard
4. Administrative Controls – Change procedures, training, or work practices
5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Protect the worker when hazards cannot be fully controlled



PPE is important — but it should not be the only control used.

THE FOCUS FOUR HAZARDS

Focus 4 Hazards	Risks	Controls
Electrical	Energized panels or circuits Skipped or incorrect Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) Assumed de-energization	Always test before touch Follow LOTO every time Use proper PPE and insulated tools
Falls	Ladders, lifts, scaffolding Overreaching or improper setup	Inspect equipment before use Maintain 3 points of contact Use fall protection when required
Struck-By	Falling tools/materials Moving equipment	Secure materials at height Stay aware of surroundings Wear required PPE
Caught-In/Between	Pinch points Tight workspaces Moving machinery	Keep hands clear Communicate with crew Stay out of “line of fire” zones

BEFORE YOU START WORK

Ask yourself:

- What hazards are present right now?
- Has anything changed?
- Is everything de-energized and verified?
- Do I have the right tools and PPE?

KEY TAKEAWAY

Hazard recognition is the first step to preventing every incident.

Strong crews don't react- they prepare.



**INDEPENDENT
ELECTRICAL
CONTRACTORS**

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

-
-
-
-
-

CREW SIGN-OFF

Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

Crew Members: _____

FOREMAN SCRIPT (5–7 MINUTES)

Opening (1 minute):

“Alright team, today we’re talking about hazard recognition and the Focus Four hazards. Most incidents on jobsites don’t happen because people don’t know better- they happen because something gets missed or assumed in the moment.”

Hazard Recognition (1–2 minutes):

“Hazard recognition means we’re identifying risks before we start work- not after something goes wrong.

That means:

- Looking at the job before we begin
- Paying attention when conditions change
- Speaking up if something doesn’t look right

This isn’t a one-time thing- it’s something we do all day.”

Hierarchy of Controls (1 minute)

“Once we recognize a hazard, the next step is controlling it the right way. We use what’s called the Hierarchy of Controls.

The best control is always to remove the hazard completely if we can. If we can’t eliminate it, we look for safer ways to work, engineering controls, procedures, and then PPE as the last line of defense.

Remember: PPE is important, but it should not be the only thing protecting us.”

Focus Four Overview (2–3 minutes):

“Let’s walk through the main hazards we deal with:

Electrical- This is our biggest risk. Always verify power is off. Never assume. Follow LOTO every time.

Falls- We’re on ladders and lifts all the time. Set them up right, don’t rush, and don’t overreach.

Struck-by- Watch for falling tools, materials, and moving equipment. Stay aware of your surroundings.

Caught-in/between- Be careful around pinch points, tight spaces, and moving equipment. Keep your hands clear and communicate.”

Application to Today’s Work (1–2 minutes):

“Let’s bring it back to today:

- What hazards are we dealing with on this job right now?
- Has anything changed since yesterday?
- Is everything verified safe before we start?”

(Allow quick responses)

Close (30 seconds):

“Take a minute before you start your task today- look around, think it through, and don’t assume anything. If something doesn’t look right, stop and say something. That’s how we prevent incidents.”